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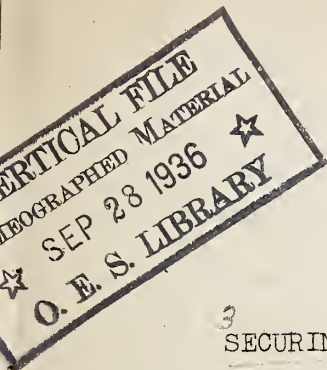
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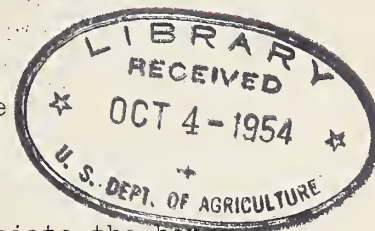


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SECURING TECHNICAL INFORMATION AND PERSONAL SERVICE FROM
THE EXTENSION SERVICE¹

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First of all I want to state that I very much appreciate the honor and responsibility which came to me with the invitation to discuss this very important subject. Members of this organization are responsible for a very important phase of the agricultural education program in America. No one who has worked with Smith-Hughes teachers in their regular high-school courses and evening schools for adults, or who has participated in State Future Farmer conferences and contests, or who has been so extremely fortunate as to attend and receive inspiration from a National Future Farmer Congress with its pick of America's young manhood, can question my enthusiastically appreciative attitude toward the great contribution which you are making to our America of today as well as to our American of tomorrow.

I have been exceedingly fortunate for one who has spent many years working in a technical field of agriculture in that I have had an opportunity to work with many teachers of vocational agriculture. Thus I have come to know not only the objectives, the plan and scope, and the accomplishments, but I have come to know also some of the difficulties under which the work is, at times, conducted.

I am, therefore, keenly interested in the subject assigned to me. I believe that in each State the college of agriculture in all its divisions should be very closely tied in with the teachers of agriculture in its high schools. This applies not only to the workers in the field of agricultural extension but also to the staff members engaged in resident teaching and research. Each group is doing an important work. No one can rate the relative importance and worth. We do know that each group is handicapped in the conduct and effectiveness of its work unless there be proper understanding, cooperation, and coordination of effort among the staff members working in the several fields.

It is the primary objective of this paper to consider the more effective working relationships between those engaged in teaching vocational agriculture and those engaged in agricultural extension work in our several States.

¹ Presented before the annual meeting of the American Vocational Association in Chicago, Ill., December 6, 1935.

Sources of Information

The subject is too important to have its discussion based upon the observations and experiences of one person or the staff of one institution. Therefore, the information presented was secured largely from replies to an inquiry addressed to State supervisors of vocational education, directors of agricultural extension, and teacher trainers. In addition to the splendid response received from representatives of these three groups, I have used information, relative to the subject under discussion, secured a year ago from the deans of agriculture in 41 land-grant colleges and universities. These deans had responded to a request for information as to what was being done to correlate the work of their colleges of agriculture with the Smith-Hughes schools in their States.

No attempt has been made to secure detailed information regarding the practices in each State. The information received indicates the relationship which now exists between the teachers of vocational agriculture and the extension workers as regards technical information and personal service, and some suggestions as to further steps which should be taken.

In this paper I have included some examples and suggestions which illustrate general principles, and will, I hope, stimulate thought. Therefore, when mention is made that in a certain State a practice is followed, I do not imply that this is the only State in which this is done.

The General Situation

The letters received indicate that the relationships between the two groups of workers are harmonious and cooperative in approximately 65 percent of the States, that there is little cooperation in 25 percent of the States, and that the two groups are rather antagonistic in the few other States. Nearly all of the letters indicate a strong desire to bring about more effective coordination. The statements of several of the administrators varied little from the statement of the dean in a Western State who wrote, "Conditions are becoming increasingly favorable in this State for correlating the work of both agencies whenever it is desirable."

The situation reported by many is illustrated by the following statement made by a teacher trainer in one of the North Central States:

"There is hearty cooperation and a splendid feeling of good will. However, we really need more technical, as well as personal, extension services to teachers of vocational agriculture."

The situation in the same State was referred to by the supervisor as follows, "Extension force is friendly and willing to cooperate, but heavy program in proportion to staff members makes it impossible for teachers to get as much help as is needed."

The supervisor in another State reports, "There has never been any friction. Objective for both groups is the same--better farm practice and better farm life. The methods are different. Systematic instruction belongs to the Smith-Hughes group, while general informational work, demonstrations, and 4-H club work belong to Smith-Lever group."

Approximately 25 percent reported as did the director of extension in a Southern State, "Practically no cooperation in personal service or preparation." Or as a supervisor in a New England State reported, "Cooperation not as close as it could be." It is very unfortunate that the two groups seem to be antagonistic to each other in a few of the States.

A teacher trainer writes, "Relationships between the two services, unfortunately, have been characterized by not only lack of cooperation but by jealousy and discord." A supervisor in another State reports, "There exists very little cooperation. It has been the custom for the extension service to do the going and leave us to do the operating."

It is, however, very encouraging to note that progress is reported as being made in nearly all of the States in that the two groups of workers are becoming more cooperative. Many expressed a desire to learn of the ways and means which have brought about improved conditions in other States.

The representative of one institution wrote, "Our limitation is because of lack of knowing what to do rather than a lack of desire to co-ordinate the two fields of work."

In the remainder of the paper I shall attempt to indicate the practices which have been reported from the several States as contributing to more effective coordination of the two services. An indication of the interest and thought now being given to furthering the integration of the two lines of work can be found in the many administrative devices now being tried.

1.--Appointment of individuals to give special services to vocational teachers

Dr. J. A. Linke, chief, Agricultural Education Service, United States Department of The Interior, has advised me that the United States Department of Agriculture has recently employed Dr. L. E. Jackson, who is working with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in the preparation of technical information for teachers of vocational agriculture. Dr. Jackson is working in close cooperation with Mr. Ross of the Agricultural Education Service.

In Nebraska a special college editor has been appointed to make the publications of greater value to the teachers of vocational agriculture.

At Iowa State College, Dr. H. M. Hamlin now gives one-fourth of his time to a program-planning project for Smith-Hughes teachers. His work consists mainly of the preparation of course of study materials. He is at present cooperating with members of the extension staff in agricultural economics and agricultural engineering in organizing courses in land utilization and farm mechanics, respectively, for evening school groups.

The Farm Management Department at Purdue University has employed a full-time man to work with teachers of vocational agriculture. This service takes the form of a graduate course for which university credit is granted. The plans for this work were developed cooperatively with the State director of vocational education.

In Wisconsin, Dr. James has made a special study of the work in several States in the matter of securing technical information for Smith-Hughes teachers.

2.--Integrating committees and councils

In many States integrating committees and councils have been set up to formulate constructive, comprehensive programs of agricultural education; to coordinate the activities of the Smith-Hughes teachers, the county agents and the other agencies involved, and to make available and use most effectively technical information and specialists' services. Time permits but a few illustrations.

In Ohio a committee composed of Smith-Hughes teachers, county agents, and supervisors of the Smith-Hughes and agricultural extension work has been in operation during the past two years. This committee has met two or three times each year to discuss mutual problems, many of which are concerned with the use of specialists and the distribution of publications to Smith-Hughes teachers. Director Ramsower reports that this committee has been helpful in arriving at a mutual understanding of the services which may be expected from the extension staff.

In Indiana, county agricultural education councils are being formed in many counties where the number of teachers of vocational agriculture is sufficient to warrant the organization. The council is usually composed of the county superintendent of schools, the county agricultural agent and the teachers of vocational agriculture.

A unifying council has been set up in Iowa in an attempt to secure proper integration of the activities in extension and vocational agriculture. This council is made up of a central committee of three: the agricultural teacher trainer, the State supervisor of agricultural education, and the State leader of county agents, and three advisory groups. The advisory groups are as follows:

a. A group of administrative officers: the dean of agriculture, the director of agricultural extension, the State director of vocational education, and the head of the department of vocational education.

b. A group of three teachers chosen by the State supervisor.

c. A group of three county agents chosen by the State leader of county agents.

The central committee has been holding monthly meetings for more than two years and has developed plans and initiated programs of action which have helped materially in bringing about better understanding and more effective coordination.

Conferences

As I have reviewed the letters from extension directors, supervisors of vocational education and teacher trainers, I have come to the conclusion

that there is a definite correlation between the holding of county, regional, and State conferences of the workers and administrative heads of the two groups and the development of mutual understanding and confidence, friendly cooperation, and effective coordination of effort in putting into operation the most constructive programs of agricultural education. Needless to state, these conferences have helped materially in making the technical information and personal service of the extension divisions available to the teachers.

After abstracting the letters received, I found that I had seven pages of excerpts descriptive of these county, regional, and State conferences. It is obvious that but a few can be quoted in this paper. Therefore, I shall quote representative ones from States scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

New York -

"--- all directors and teachers in the State meet for an outlook conference with county agents and the extension specialists, who prepare outlook data and estimates. Through the State the agricultural group is divided into 21 sections ranging from 8 to 15 teachers per section. These men meet once a month for professional and technical improvement. Extension specialists meet these groups.

New Jersey -

"We hold frequent joint conferences."

Connecticut -

"Groups meet together occasionally for conferences."

Massachusetts -

"Fine cooperation resulting from frequent conferences."

Georgia -

"Last January we held a joint 2-day conference of extension workers and vocational agriculture teachers. Methods of coordinating the work were discussed. Had service reports from county agents and Smith-Hughes teachers telling how they had coordinated their work in different counties. These reports constituted the high light of the conference and I feel they pointed the way as to how all county extension workers and vocational teachers may most satisfactorily supplement each other's work."

Ohio -

"We make wide use of the extension workers in district conferences of Smith-Hughes teachers."

Illinois -

"Invitations are sent to teachers of vocational agriculture to attend important county and regional agricultural conferences sponsored by college and extension service."

Wisconsin -

"In each county conferences of county agents and vocational teachers are held to discuss respective programs and agree as to division of responsibility and methods of cooperation to avoid duplication of effort and expense."

Iowa -

"The State council has encouraged the holding of county meetings in which the workers in the two fields participate."

Minnesota -

"Smith-Hughes teachers are invited to district meetings of county agents."

South Dakota -

"Administrative heads attend annual conferences of workers in the other field."

Montana -

"Many specialists and county agents attend Smith-Hughes conferences."

Oklahoma -

"The teachers of agriculture and the county agents are meeting together in districts over the State, and through these meetings are setting up State-wide programs of agricultural education through the schools."

Texas -

"In Bell and Madison Counties the county agents and teachers of vocational agriculture meet regularly to plan and carry out county agricultural programs."

Oregon -

"Organizing 24 county agricultural conferences to be participated in by county agents and Smith-Hughes teachers, as well as other leaders in the field of agriculture."

California -

"In several counties there are informal organizations of technical agriculturists which meet once each month for discussion of mutual problems. These are known as 'County Agricultural Round Tables'."

Supervisors As Members of College Staff

In several States the State supervisor of agricultural education or one or more assistant supervisors are members of the faculties of the State agricultural colleges. In six States the supervisors were reported to have their headquarters at the college.

Memoranda of Agreements

In many States memoranda of agreements are relied upon to bring about the desired coordination and cooperation through recognition of the responsibilities of each group. It is evident that in several States the administrative heads place a great deal of emphasis upon memoranda of agreements which rather rigidly define both positively and negatively the duties and responsibilities of each group. Many of the letters emphasized the agreements relative to 4-H club work. On the other hand, the director of extension in a Western State reports, "Have memorandum of agreement in files but doubt its potency as promoter for cooperation and coordination. Other methods are more effective."

Services Rendered to Workers in Other Groups

a. By county agents

Workers in 10 States reported that county agents assist the teachers with adult evening schools and from 3 States came reports of assistance with high-school classes.

b. By specialists

Extension specialists help with evening-school groups in many States. The amount of help given varies from the giving of a few lectures to the situation in an Eastern State whose director of extension reports, "Extension specialists plan and conduct all the evening schools for adults."

In several States the specialists are cooperating in the development of the classroom work of vocational teachers through the preparation of subject matter material and the giving of some lectures. In a number of States the specialists assist with regional and State conferences. From a Southern State comes the report, "Specialists are working to bring about effective coordination between teachers of vocational agriculture and county agents." Only a few States report that the specialists do not render assistance to the teachers. However, it is the more general policy for Smith-Hughes teachers to secure the help of the specialists by making application to the county agents, thus avoiding duplication and conflict.

c. By teachers of vocational agriculture

In many States the teachers assist with 4-H club work, frequently acting as local leaders. They also assist with community meetings, demonstrations, fairs, etc. In a few cases it was reported that the teachers give service to the county agent's office and even take over the work when he is out of the county on other work or on his vacation.

Joint Enterprises

A number of the States report that Smith-Hughes teachers and county agents have set up joint projects, such as soil conservation, demonstrational plots, farm record keeping, series of meetings, educational programs in C.C.C. camps, livestock shows, and judging contests. In many States marked progress

is reported in working out the long existent conflict between future farmer and 4-H club activities. This is commendable because very valuable work is being done by each of these great organizations of farm youth. The value of the future farmer and 4-H club activities cannot be overestimated. We agree with Disraeli's statement "The youth of a nation are the trustees of prosperity." At present it is impossible for the combined efforts of the two groups to reach more than a small percentage of the farm youth. Therefore, it is only right and proper that we have effective cooperation between the two groups. The letters indicate real progress in a great many States in attaining this objective. The greatest progress is reported by those States in which the leaders recognize that each activity can be made to supplement the other, so that as one extension director reports, "County agents and teachers cooperate in 4-H club and future farmer activities."

In Iowa the Smith-Hughes teachers and the extension workers are cooperating in the development of a program for rural youth. Plans are developed by a joint committee. The two groups have also shared in an annual Rural Young Peoples' Assembly, held at the college during Farm and Home Week.

Preparation and Distribution of Technical Information

It is encouraging to note that there is a growing tendency for the extension and resident staff members in our agricultural colleges to take a larger part in working out course material and in furnishing bulletins and mimeographed pamphlets. Unfortunately this practice is not followed in all States. I regret that the situation in one of our States is such as to result in the following description.

"Both county agents and State leaders have refused to supply available technical information to vocational teachers upon the grounds that it would reduce the comparative prestige of the members of the extension staff. On the other hand, vocational teachers have failed to give credit to 4-H club work where such credit was due."

Contrast this situation with that in the many States in which the bulletins are furnished almost without limit for class use in departments of vocational agriculture.

Kansas State College and Iowa State College provide sets of bound bulletins for each of the agricultural courses offered in the high schools. These bulletins are the principal references in many schools. Mississippi, Nebraska, and Tennessee report the appointment of staff members to the responsibility of preparing publications especially appropriate for use in high schools. In New York, resident and extension staff members have prepared a study manual composed of data developed from the various research activities in the field of agriculture. This is revised once each year and sold to the teachers of agriculture by the teachers' association.

In Ohio a "Handbook of Agronomy" has been prepared for teachers. In Iowa Dr. Hamlin has cooperated with extension specialists in agricultural economics and agricultural engineering in the preparation of course of study material.

The letters from 22 other States report that experiment-station and extension bulletins are available to vocational teachers and their students.

In many States the supplies must be obtained through the office of the county agent. However, the policy in several States is in agreement with the following statement from a director of extension, "It is not quite the function of a Smith-Hughes teacher to build up a supply of bulletins in his office which he may have for distribution to farm people in his district."

Special releases to county agents are sent to vocational teachers in many States. Outlook material, moving pictures, and lantern slides are available to teachers in several States.

Contribution of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration Program to More Effective Cooperation

One of the lasting benefits of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration program has been the teaching of practical cooperation among farm people. It is significant to note that many of my correspondents have pointed out the contributions made by the administration of this program to closer affiliation and more effective cooperation between the extension and vocational-agriculture groups. They have found from experience that much more effective work can be done when all work together in a systematic manner.

Exchange of Personnel

The conduct of this AAA program has resulted in drawing into the extension staffs many who have had training and experience in vocational agriculture. From many States have come reports of better understanding and more effective cooperation as a result of this transfer of workers from one field to the other, even though a few reports indicate that there have been so many transfers as to temporarily handicap the teaching program.

Professional Opportunities for Teachers and County Agents

A few of the States report that definite efforts are now being made to provide better opportunities for professional improvement for teachers and county agents while they are employed, many of whom have taken no systematic training since their college days.

I have referred to the provision made by Purdue University. In Iowa in 1934, a 1-week short course for teachers and agents was held; in 1935 this was expanded into a Country Life Institute with an adequate budget and numerous speakers of national reputation. During the summer of 1935 also there was held for the first time a 3-week graduate course for agents and teachers. It is planned to develop this project on a permanent basis with broadened offerings and increased attendance. A standing committee, whose membership comprises administrative heads, county agents, and Smith-Hughes teachers, has been appointed to develop this project.

I have exceeded a reasonable time allowance, yet I have not discussed all the ways and means which are being used effectively in different States to bring about proper correlation of these two organizations which are contributing so largely to our American program of agricultural education.

In conclusion, I want to commend those individuals who are charged with the responsibility of organizing and conducting these two very important fields of agricultural education for the thoughtful, constructive steps which are being taken to bring about proper understanding, real cooperation, and effective coordination. Much progress has been made during the past few years, and this promises greater accomplishments in the years just ahead.

